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I PLAYED WITH HER LONG, LONG
RINGLETS.

BY HENRY C. WATSON.

I played with the long, long ringlets,
 I toyed with each jet black curl,
 And I looked in the merry, laughing face
 Of my beautiful blue-eyed girl.
 I looked in her eyes, and it seemed to me
 They were frank, and open, and true;—
 O those jet-black curls—those olive cheeks,
 Those eyes of heavenly blue.

I gazed in her eyes, and I thought I read
 An answering love to mine,
 And my soul was drunken with love's excess,
 As with royal ripe old wine.
 I took her dimpled hands in my own,
 And drew her close to my breast;
 And I said, O dove, come home to my heart,
 And make it your place of rest.

The jet-black curls, all trembling now,
 Crept round as her head bent low;
 Her blue-eyes swam in a diamond-mist,
 And her cheeks were all aglow.
 I folded her close in my nervous arms,
 Though then as an infant's weak,
 And she breathed the words that I pined to hear,
 Though I scarce could hear her speak.

O words of mystic, deep import,
 O words whose letters are of gold
 They live in the heart—they ring in the ear
 Till the world grows hoary and old.
 They were neither uttered nor said,
 They were murmured, whispered and sighed,
 But the ear of love knows the meaning well
 As from lip to lip they glide.

And so she was all my own!
 Mine, mine, for weal or for woe!
 A jewel to wear in my innermost heart,
 Whose price I alone should know.
 Whose price was above the gold of the earth,
 Beyond the pearls of the sea.
 A jewel whose setting was maiden truth,
 And all its worth for me!

CURIOSITIES OF BLINDNESS.

Appalling as the deprivation of sight may be, it is not without some remarkable compensations. Other faculties, both of intellect and of sense, often seem to gain by it; and Dufau, a French writer, affirms that the blind seldom become imbecile, and still less frequently insane. Profound thinkers practically admit that vision interferes somewhat with deep cogitation. Malebranche, when he wished to think intensely used to close his window-shutters in the daytime, excluding every ray of light; and, for a like reason, Democritus is said to have put out his eyes in order that he might philosophise the better; which latter story, however, it should be observed, though told by several ancient writers, is doubted by Cicero, and discredited by Plutarch. Speaking on this point, M. Dufau says:

"When we wish to increase our power of attention, we shut our eyes, thus assuming artificial

blindness. Diderot used often to talk with his eyes closed, and at such times became sublimely eloquent."

There was lately living in the county of York, England, a gentleman of fortune, who, though totally blind, was an expert archer; "so expert," says our informant, "that out of twenty shots with the long-bow he was far my superior. His sense of hearing was so keen, that when a boy behind the target rang a bell, the blind archer knew precisely how to aim the shaft."

The tenacity of the memory of the blind is well known. This characteristic faculty is, according to Father Charlevoix, turned to good account in Japan, where the public records of the empire are committed to memory by chosen blind men. An old blind mat-maker in England can (if he still lives) repeat Thompson's "Seasons," and one or two other long poems, besides having an almost equally ready knowledge of several of the Gospels.

Men of genius have sometimes triumphantly thrown off some of the worst disabilities of blindness. Genius ever devises ways and means of its own. It has a thousand little contrivances unknown to the ordinary student, who is content enough to travel along the beaten road which others have fashioned for him. Saunderson, the blind mathematician's whole machinery for computing was a small piece of deal divided by lines into a certain number of squares, and pierced at certain angles with holes large enough to admit a metal pin. With this simple board and a box of pins he made all his calculations; yet, in 1711, he was the friend of Sir Isaac Newton, and by his interest was elected Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. It is most probable that he never beheld the distant orbs of heaven; yet with the highest skill he reasoned of the laws which control them; undoing and explaining the nature and beauty of light which he could not behold, and the glory of that bow in the clouds which he had never seen.

Thus also was it with Huber, the blind philosopher of Geneva. His discoveries in the honeyed labors of bees have equalled, if not surpassed, those of any other one student of nature. It remained for Huber, not only to corroborate truths which others partially discovered, but also to detect and describe minute particulars which had escaped even the acute observation of Swammerdam. It is true that others supplied him with eyes, but he furnished them with thought and intellect; he saw with their eyes. Thus he clearly proved that there are two distinct sets of bees in every hive—honey-gatherers and the wax-makers and nurses; that the larvæ of working-bees can by course of diet be changed to queens; thus also he accurately described the sanguinary conflicts of rival queens; the recognition of old companions or of royalty by the use of the antennæ; thus he explained the busy hum and unceasing vibration of wing ever going on in the hive, as being necessary for due ventilation.

One of the last incidents in the old man's life that seemed to rouse and interest him, was the arrival of a present of stingless bees, from their discoverer, Captain B. Hall. Unwearied diligence and love for his work, no doubt greatly aided him in all these discoveries; but genius elected for him what mere assiduity would never have accomplished. She taught him in a few minutes to swim the river of difficulty, while others spent hours in searching for a ford.

It is the union of diligence and genius which

has made so many a blind man famous among his brethren with eyes; not only the head to conceive, but the hand to carry out and achieve, in its own way, the plan of wisdom and of beauty. Thus Metcalf, the blind guide and engineer, constructed roads through the wilds of Derbyshire; thus Davidson ventilated the deepest coal mines, and lectured on the structure of the eye; as did Dr. Moyes on chemistry and optics; thus Blacklock, poet and musician, master of four languages besides his own, wrote both prose and poetry with elegance and ease; thus, nearer to our own time, Holman, the traveller, has made himself a name far beyond the shores of Great Britain. We know not what Saundersons or Hubers the present generation is to see. One name equally great in another path of fame it already had: Prescott, the historian of "Ferdinand and Isabella," "Mexico and Peru," &c., who though not blind, had a defect of the eyes which prevented him from reading and writing, but whose literary labors had nevertheless delighted and instructed thousands both in the Old and New World.

Coleridge remarks that "a diseased state of an organ of sense will perpetually tamper with the understanding, and perhaps at last overthrow it. But when one organ is obliterated, the mind applies some other to a double use. Some ten years back, at Sowerby, I met a man perfectly blind—from infancy. His chief amusement was fishing on the wild uneven banks of the Eden, and up the difficult mountain streams. His friend, also stone blind, knew every gate and stile of the district. John Gough, of Kendal, blind, is not only a mathematician, but an infallible botanist and zoologist; correcting mistakes of keen sportsmen as to birds and vermin. His face is all one eye. The eyes of Moyes, although he was totally blind, were not insensible to intense light. Colors were not distinguished by him, but felt. Red was disagreeable; he said it was like 'the grating of a saw;' while green was very pleasant, and similar to 'a smooth surface' when touched."

In some instances blindness seems to have gifted the sufferer with new powers. A Dr. Guyse, we read, lost his eyesight in the pulpit while he was at prayer before the sermon; but nevertheless managed to preach as usual. An old lady of the congregation hearing him deplore his loss, thus strove to comfort him:

"God be praised," said she "that your sight is gone. I never heard your reverence preach so powerful a sermon in my life."

The detection of color by the touch of the blind is a mooted point. Several anecdotes are told of blind persons who had the power of discriminating colors by the touch; but if the testimony of a large body of blind children can be relied on, the detection of color is utterly beyond their reach. Saunderson's power of detecting by his finger or tongue a counterfeit coin, which had deceived the eye of a connoisseur, is a totally different question. We are hardly aware how much of our dexterity in the use of the eye arises from incessant practice. Those who have been relieved of blindness at an advanced or even early period of life, have often been found to recur to the old and more familiar sense of touch, in preference to sight, especially during the first few months after recovering their sight. Coleridge, in his "Omni-ana," mentions a most remarkable instance of a blind man at Hanover, who possessed so keen a touch as to be able to read with his fingers books of ordinary print, if printed, as most German books are, on coarse paper.